

## GREATEST TRAGEDY THAT HAS BEFALLEN CHRISTIAN WORLD

Magnitude of Calamity in Calabria and Sicily Is Unprecedented—Entire Region Completely Destroyed—Whole Face of Country and the Coast Line Altered.

The earthquake which has devastated the Italian department of Calabria and Sicily has wrought the greatest tragedy which ever has befallen the Christian world.

It is colossal without precedent. Nothing previously known in European history can be compared with it. A whole region has been destroyed. That corner of Italy on which nature seemed to smile, Messina and Reggio, are heaps of ruins under which lie buried thousands of corpses.

All the country along the Straits of Messina has suffered. Lower down the coast the sea rushed with terrific violence into Giarre, Riposto, Bordon and Giovanni, sweeping away houses, ships, fishing boats and human beings. All the fishing boats at sea have disappeared.

At Palma and Bagnara the dead are counted by hundreds and the injured

of the strait, must have been more violent, for scarcely one stone remains on another in that flourishing city of only two days ago.

Where a few days ago stood the homes and works of men and busy streets there is nothing but chaotic rocks and earth.

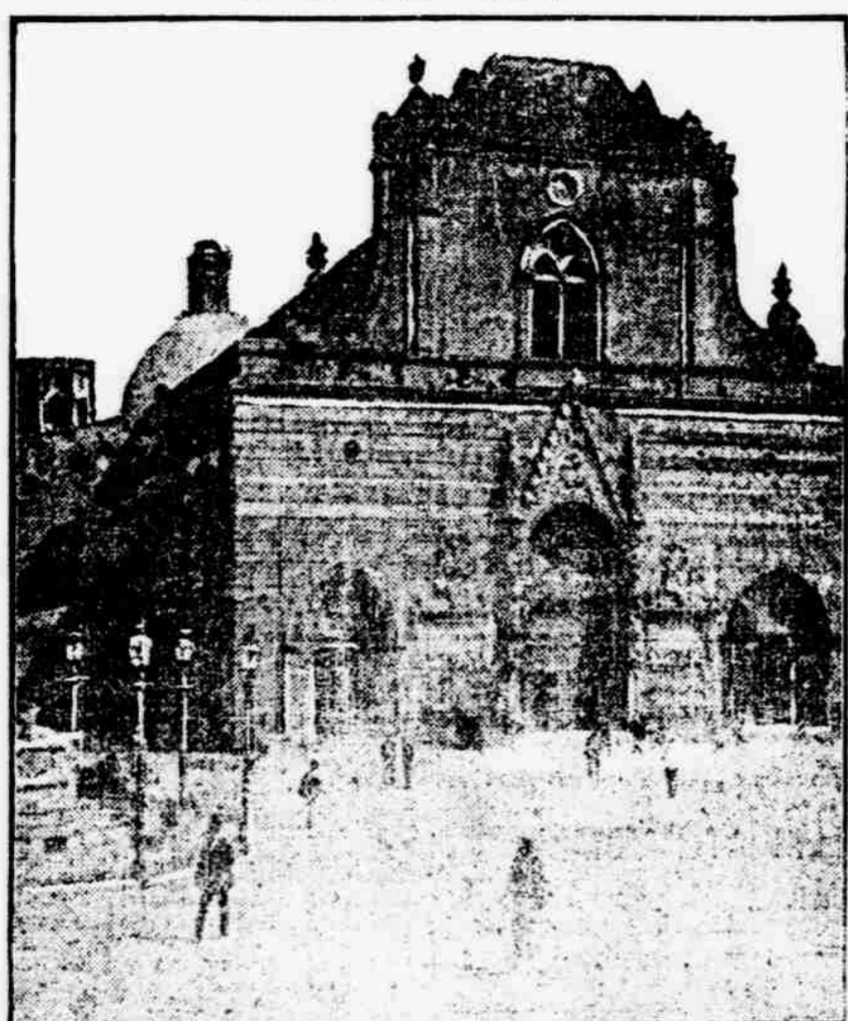
The city had vanished as completely as Aladdin's palace under the magician's spell.

**Country of Many Languages.** Calabria has one and one-third million inhabitants. The inhabitants speak Greek or Albanian dialects or an antique Italian.

**Visit Stricken Subjects.**

As King Humbert won the admiration of his loyal people by his visit to the hospitals of Naples during the cholera epidemic, so has Victor Emmanuel, through his emulation of his father's act of bravery. In 1905 Vic-

CATHEDRAL AT MESSINA.



Messina was a city of 150,000 inhabitants, and is said to have been founded under the name of Zancle in 1041 B. C. It is an important seaport of Sicily and capital of the province. Among the public edifices are about 50 churches, many of them of great beauty. The cathedral,

by thousands. Throughout the province of Calabria the ravages were frightful.

**All Completely Destroyed.**

Messina and Reggio are in ruins. The towns of Naro, Scilla, Mafetto, Belluso, Riposto and Bagnara have been destroyed, as has the town of Gazari. In Calabria, Cannito has been wiped off the map. Nearly every town along the coast of Sicily for miles south of Messina was carried by the sea.

The earthquake's titanic might transformed the face of Sicily; rivers were dried up or their course changed; hills disappeared; vast crevices are yawning in the earth; the country is desolated.

The destruction of property cannot be as great as at San Francisco, for Messina and Reggio, the two principal cities destroyed, were not rich or magnificent from the metropolitan point of view. As a great cataclysm of nature, however, this disaster is on a far vaster scale than the California phenomenon.

**Face of Country Altered.**

The whole face of the country and the coast line have been altered. Even Scylla and Charybdis have changed the positions they have occupied since Aeneas' legendary voyage.

The three provinces where the greatest damage was done were Messina and Catania, in Sicily, and Reggio di Calabria, on the mainland. They comprise about 4,400 square miles. The rock of Charybdis now blocks the entrance to the strait of Messina.

Several hundred persons perished and much damage was done outside of these provinces, but within them the devastation was so complete that scarcely a human habitation remains. All accounts now agree that the time occupied by nature's gigantic spasms was but 32 seconds.

Some minutes later a great wave completed the havoc in the ill-fated coast towns.

**Shock a Fearful One.**

The violence of the shock seems to have been unprecedented except by volcanic eruptions within a limited area.

The buildings of Messina were not merely shaken down—their foundations literally were yanked from beneath them to one side or to the other, until they toppled from the perpendicular and fell in ruins alongside their original sites.

That was the experience of Messina. That of Reggio, on the opposite side

of Emmanuel, despite the protests of his ministry, insisted to Calabria personally to console the survivors of the earthquake. As soon as the magnitude of the present disaster became apparent the king and queen made arrangements to go at once to the scene of the calamity.

Queen Helena refused to allow her husband, the king, to go alone to the scene of the disaster. So said she



King Victor Emmanuel, Emperor of Italy, and Queen Helena, Empress of Italy, visiting the ruins of Calabria.

would not give up her duty. The queen explained to a number of her courtiers that she considered it her duty to do all in her power to comfort and help her afflicted subjects.

## SINCE BEGINNING OF HISTORY CALABRIA HAS BEEN SCOURGED

No Part of the Earth That Has Suffered So Severely from Earthquakes and Volcanic Eruptions—Contrast Between Ancient and Modern Times in Treatment of Disaster.

ITALIAN CITIES WHERE LOSS OF LIFE WAS HEAVIEST.

Cities in which loss of life was heaviest were as follows: Messina, population 100,000; wrecked by shock and swept by tidal wave.

Reggio, population 50,000; destroyed.

Catania, population 140,000; in ruins.

Cassano, population 6,700; in ruins.

Cosenza, population 21,000; nearly all dead.

Seminara, small village, destroyed.

Scilla, population 7,800; in ruins.

Paterno, population 24,000; in ruins.

Vittoria, population 32,000; badly wrecked.

Naro, population 12,800; half destroyed.

Riposto, population 7,000; in ruins.

Ali, Mineo, Patti and Castoreale, Sicilian towns; all badly damaged, with heavy loss of life.

Palmi, Bagnara, San Giovanni and Cannitello, Calabrian villages; all in ruins.

The portion of Italy affected by the recent earthquake is in the most convulsion-stricken region of the globe.

The main area of disturbance was in Calabria, though cities on the island of Sicily were shaken and a tidal wave inundated that island's sea coast.

Notwithstanding the fact that since the beginning of history the ground of Calabria has been known to have the habit of opening as if to swallow up its inhabitants, the region has always been well populated. Nearly a million

The calamity in Calabria gives fresh interest to the elaborate catalogue of earthquakes to which Maj. de Montessus de Balore has devoted years of labor, and which he completed a few months ago. It includes no fewer than 130,000 distinct shocks of which trustworthy details have been preserved, and indicates with some approach to scientific accuracy how the manifestations of seismic activity are distributed over the earth's surface. The table goes back as far as authentic records are obtainable, but the preponderance of the records refers to shocks which have occurred within the past 50 years. Here is the summary of Maj. de Balore's statistics:

Area.	Earthquakes.
Scandinavia	605
British Isles	1,133
France	2,781
Spain and Portugal	2,656
Switzerland	2,635
Italy	25,672
Holland and North Germany	2,526
Sicily	4,331
Greece	10,245
Russia	254
Asia Minor	4,461
India	815
Japan	27,562
Africa	179
Atlantic Islands	1,704
United States, Pacific Coast	4,467
Atlantic Coast	957
Mexico	5,286
Central America	2,759
West Indies	2,561
South America	3,681
Java	2,125
Australia and Tasmania	85
New Zealand	1,925

It will be noticed that Sicily, for which the records go back 3,000 years, has been shaken very little compared with its neighbor Italy.

**Seismic Convulsions.**

The most shaken countries of the world are Italy, Japan, Greece, South America (the Pacific coast), Java, Sicily and Asia Minor. The lands most free from seismic convulsions are Af-

CHURCH OF ST. GREGORIO, MESSINA.



and a half of cheerful, reckless people lived there. The Apennine mountains run through the region for a distance of 160 miles, considerably reducing the area amenable to tillage, but the valleys and plains are among the most fertile anywhere in the world, yielding in abundance a variety of crops. The neighboring fisheries are important.

In respect of the property damage inflicted and the number of lives extinguished, as well as in respect of the extent of the disturbance, the earthquake far eclipses the great disasters of its type, such as that which destroyed Lisbon in 1755 and that which visited the western coast of South America in August, 1906.

**Region Always in Turmoil.**

Probably no part of the earth of equal fertility, population and historic note has suffered more severely from earthquakes and volcanic eruptions than this part of the Mediterranean basin. From the beginnings of recorded history Stromboli has seldom been quiet. Vesuvius has been frequently in eruption, and Etna is always growling and periodically is in violent action.

With or without eruptions from these volcanoes the region has felt disastrous earthquakes in almost every century since history began to be written. The eruption of Vesuvius which overwhelmed Pompeii and Herculaneum in 79 A. D. is most spoken of because of the relics of antiquity which it so strangely preserved, but within the last eight centuries there have been many earthquakes thereabouts which caused great loss of life and property.

For instance, Catania, which is again visited, is said to have lost 15,000 people by earthquake in 1127 and to have been wholly destroyed, with a loss of 18,000 lives, in September, 1693. By this earthquake 54 Sicilian cities and towns and 200 villages were reported wrecked, with a total loss of 100,000 lives.

rica, Australia, Russia, Siberia, Scandinavia and Canada. As a rule, where earthquakes are most frequent they are most severe. But to this general statement there are exceptions. Indian shocks, though less numerous, being often very disastrous. Loss of life in many cases depends, however, on the intensity of the earth movement.

Numerically, also, France has registered more seismic tremors than Spain and Portugal, but France in historic times has experienced no earthquake disaster approaching the havoc wrought by the one calamity at Lisbon.

**Ancient and Modern Times.**

Perhaps the most striking difference between the antique and the modern worlds appears in their differences of social and governmental attitude toward such disasters. We really know more, thanks to the Younger Pliny's account of his uncle's death, about the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum and what was done about it than we know of any similar disaster for 1,000 years afterwards.

The elder Pliny was a man of science, who happened to be in command of the naval station near Naples. He got out a vessel and went as near as he could to the lava flow to observe it—so near that he was suffocated by the fumes. Incidentally he picked up some fugitives from the water and along the beach. His nephew records that as an evidence of his humanity, but he does not appear to have thought of exerting his large official powers for relief of suffering. He went to his death not to aid distress but to add to his own knowledge.

Today any public official who did not exert himself to the utmost to relieve distress would be forever disgraced. That is the difference between a Christian civilization, with all its faults, and one which, with all its merits, was not Christian.

## STRICKEN MESSINA A PLACE OF GREAT NATURAL BEAUTY

Said to Have Been Founded in the Eighth Century B. C.—Has Been Frequently Victim of the Vicissitudes of War—Was Flourishing Town in Middle Ages.

CALAMITIES WHICH HAVE HAPPENED TO MESSINA.

B. C.

493—Captured by fugitives from Samos and Miletus.

472—Surrendered to Athenians.

396—Entirely destroyed by Carthaginians.

270—Seized by Hannibal.

A. D.

1189—Attacked by Richard Cœur de Lion.

1282—Besieged by Charles, duke of Anjou.

1672-78—Scene of a great revolution between Democrats and adherents of Don Juan of Austria.

1678—Abandoned by the French. Population reduced from 120,000 to 12,000.

1740—Visited by fearful plague; 40,000 people died.

1723—Almost wiped out by earthquake.

1854—Cholera carried away 16,000 inhabitants.

1908—Earthquake again felt, great damage.

Unfortunate Messina, the victim of the recent frightful catastrophe, is thus described by a traveler:

Messina, Sicily, population 150,000, is, next to Palermo, the most important city in Sicily. It is situated in the northwest corner of the island on the Strait of Messina.

Among the leading buildings are the Municipal palace, the convent of San Gregorio, which contains a museum of valuable relics, buildings of the uni-

versity, which is attended by 600 students, and a municipal hospital. The outskirts and environs are delightful, affording magnificent views of the sea, as well as of Mount Etna. On the west rises the former fort of Castellaccio, and not far away to the south is Fort Gonzaga, on a historic spot. The new Campo Santo is beautiful, with its graceful Greek colonnades and wonderful views. The Telegrafo—the summit of a pass near Messina—is much visited for its scenery. Here was supposed to be Charybdis of the familiar legend, opposite Scilla, on the Calabrian coast.

**Founded 800 B. C.** Messina is a town of great antiquity, its foundation being ascribed to pirates from Cumae in the eighth century B. C., when it was known as Zancle (a sickle), in allusion to the shape of its harbor.

At the end of the fifth century B. C. the town was occupied by fugitives from Samos and Miletus, and it soon after passed to Anaxilas, the tyrant of Rhegium, who introduced there Messenians from the Peloponnesus, by whom the name of the city was changed to Messina.

After the death of Anaxilas Messina became a republic and maintained that status until its destruction by the Carthaginians during their wars with Dionysius of Syracuse at the beginning of the fourth century B. C. It was rebuilt by Dionysius, but soon fell again into the hands of the Carthaginians, who were finally expelled by Timoleon in B. C. 343.

**Once Belonged to Rome.**

During the war between Agathocles of Syracuse and Carthage, Messina sided with the Carthaginians. The first Punic war left Messina in the possession of Rome, and the town subsequently attained considerable commercial importance.

In A. D. 831 the town was taken by

the Saracens, and in 1061 was conquered by the Normans. The town became a flourishing seat of trade in the middle ages, and received important privileges from Charles I. of Spain, which added greatly to its prosperity.

During the struggle between the aristocratic faction, or Merli, and the democratic faction, or Mavizzi, the senate, in 1674, appealed for aid to the French, who occupied the city, but soon abandoned it, after having defeated the combined fleets of Spain and Holland.

Left in the hands of the Spaniards, the city was deprived of its political liberties and soon lost its commercial importance. The plague of 1743 and the earthquake of 1783 carried off a considerable part of its population. In 1860 the place was occupied by Garibaldi and in 1861 it became a part of united Italy.

**Catania Third City in Sicily.**

Catania is the capital of the province of Catania, and the third largest city in Sicily, being outranked in population by Palermo and Messina. It has 145,000 inhabitants. In front of the cathedral is a fountain with an ancient statue of an elephant, made of lava, bearing an Egyptian granite obelisk.

The chief attraction is Mount Etna, which may be seen to good advantage from the tower of San Nicola and from the Villa Bellini.

The Benedictine monastery of San Nicola, formerly one of the most beautiful in Europe, was destroyed by an earthquake in 1693 and rebuilt by 1735. The institution was suppressed in 1866.

Its grand baroque church contains a famous organ by Donato del Piano, with five keyboards, 72 stops, and 2,916

RUIN IN A CALABRIAN CITY.



Disastrous Results of a Prior Earthquake in Italy When Ferruzzano Suffered Almost Total Destruction and Many of Its Inhabitants Were Killed by the upheaval.

pipes; the museum contains antiquities in pottery, bronze and marble, medieval armor and natural history specimens; the library contains 20,000 volumes and 300 MSS.; and the observatory is associated with that on Mount Etna.

**Foundation Ascribed to Greeks.**

The classic Catania was founded by Greeks from Chalcis about B. C. 729, and soon became prosperous. Here, in the sixth century, B. C., died Stesichorus, who created the chorus of the Greek drama, and the situation of whose tomb is said to have given name to the Piazza Stesichorea.

Reggio, across the strait of Messina from the city of Messina, is the capital of Calabria. The city suffered severely in the earthquake of three years ago, and appears to get the full force of every tremor that shakes the region of Calabria.

**AMERICAN EARTHQUAKES OF THE LAST FIFTY YEARS.**

December, 1862—Guatemala; 150 buildings and 14 churches destroyed.

Nov. 20, 1870—Quebec; slight damage.

March 26-27, 1872—California; 30 lives lost.

Aug. 10-11, 1881—Distinct tremor, Washington to New York.

November, 1893—Montreal; slight damage.

March 7, 1893—New York city; distinct tremor.

Sept. 3-17, 1899—Landslide and earthquake in Yakutat, Alaska.

Nov. 13-14, 1901—Utah; slight damage.

April 18, 1902—Guatemala; eight towns destroyed; 900 lives lost.

Feb. 5, 1903—Slight shock, West Jamaica.

In A. D. 831 the town was taken by